DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 163 494 CS 204 566

AUTHOR Darrell, Bob
TITLE The Role of Writing in the World of Work: Second Year Report on a First-Year English Enrichment Program.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (29th, Denver, Colorado, March 30-April 1, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Freshmen; *Composition (Literary); Course Descriptions; English Instruction; English Programs; Experimental Programs; Higher Education; *Occupational Information; Questionnaires; Student Attitudes; *Student Motivation; Workshops; *Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

An experimental workshop conducted weekly within a successful freshman English enrichment program enabled students to meet distinguished business, professional, and governmental leaders. The object of the workshop, termed "The Role of Writing in the World of Work," was to help the students discern the practical consequences of being able to write effectively. The guest speakers spoke briefly, emphasizing the specific skills necessary for entry into their fields and the role of good writing within those fields. They also commented on particular writing problems seen in their work. They then engaged in discussion sessions with the students. The workshop was evaluated through student questionnaires, guest interviews, and staff meetings, and results showed that all were enthusiastic about the project. (FL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Bob Darrell

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED163494

THE ROLE OF WRITING IN THE WORLD OF WORK: SECOND YEAR REPORT ON A FIRST-YEAR ENGLISH ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Bob Darrell

COLLEGE PROFILE

Kentucky Wesleyan College typifies the church-related higher education institution--a liberal arts curriculum--with such occupational programs as nursing, criminal justice, radiologic technology, etc. Fifty percent of the student population is under 22 years old--26 percent are over 25. Our students divide into 49 percent male and 51 percent female; 5 percent blacks. ACT median for entering class is 19. Most students must complete the first semester of our first-year English program; those earning A or B the first semester may bypass the second semester (96 percent of those eligible to bypass, however, elect to enroll in the second semester program). Therefore, essentially, our students receive two semesters of intensive writing.

THE FIRST-YEAR PROGRAM

Kentucky Wesleyan College's First-Year English Program is recognized as one of the nation's most successful, innovative writing programs, with more than fifty colleges and universities now using one or more of its components. Required of KWC freshman students, our expository arts writing program utilizes the following components meshed into an overall pattern which substantially alters, positively, students' writing habits.

Writing Workshops. Each fifty-minute period divides into three segments--presentation (5-8 minutes), demonstration (5-8 minutes), and practice (25-30 minutes), utilizing multimedia to present and demonstrate a writing principle, and allowing practice time during which each student applies

CS204566

what he has just considered and during which the two workshop leaders coach each student.

Cassette Analytical Evaluations. Each student submits his tri-weekly essay in a writing folder which carries his previous writings and a 90-minute cassette. During the weekend, his professor evaluates closely and analytically, word-by-word, line-by-line, each student's essay. These essays receive no grades (except for the final two).

Student Critiques. On the Monday following submission of tri-weekly essays, instructors project these essays on a large screen and students evaluate essay strengths and weaknesses and offer recommendations.

Writing Partners. Each student works with a writing partner for the full semester. In and out of workshops, writing partners provide help and criticize each other's writing efforts, thus increasing each student's ability to critically edit written material as well as providing each student additional coaching in his own writing.

The Delayed Grade. Students receive no grades until the final twenty percent of the course. Up to this time, instructors have evaluated intensively each student's work and have taught him and coached him and prepared him for extensive, graded in-workshop writing experiences (two or three begun outside and completed in class; most begun and completed in class) during the final three weeks of each semester's workshops.

Games. Significant segments of workshop demonstration and some applications are executed through games--original games designed to enable students to

exhibit how well they can apply what they learn and conventional games adopted to achieve the same goal.

Film-Making. Through years of experiences with thousands of students, we have discovered that a carefully planned film-making experience for each student, located at the proper stage in his writing development, results in a substantial increase in mastery of patterns and techniques in his writing habits. Therefore, during the year each student produces two or three Super-8 films--scripts, shoots, edits (including sound if desired).

Writing Conferences. Each student engages in at least three private writing conferences. The entry conference, prior to the first workshop, enables the student to learn about results of the diagnostic inventory he completed during orientation week, helps him set goals and objectives for the semester's work, and establishes a professional approach to the relationship of instructor, student, and subject. The medial conference provides opportunity for the student-midway through the course--to evaluate his progress, to review goals and objectives, and to examine one piece of his writing with the professor. The exit conference permits student and instructor to evaluate degree of achievement of goals and objectives, to consider attitudinal matters related to one's writing and to discuss ways to continue development of writing skills.

Program Emphases. The Wesleyan Writing Workshops program emphasizes, intensively, the skill and art of writing; its credo follows:

Study of Language. The writer's medium; to study the baisc processes of language, the English language in particular, and thereby to familiarize oneself with the writer's "medium" (the sculptor uses clay, the painter paint, the musician sound, and the writer language).

Study of Rhetoric: The writer's resources: To derive from a study of the medium an awareness of its limitations and strengths--the resources of language. Herein is the study of rhetoric: those basic principles of composition that enable the writer to use language (his "medium") to the "best possible effect."

Practice in Rhetoric: Repeated application of rhetorical principles: to put theory into practice by applying rhetorical principles in the act of writing. The formula here is simple: practice, practice, practice--supervised by an instructor-editor.

The Cooperating Teacher Project. This project provides senior students with superior academic records opportunity to learn how to teach writing.

All First-Year Writing Program staff members share in election of students to the Cooperating Teacher Project. Each student co-teaches in two workshops (each workshop meets for fifty minutes three times weekly) for two semesters and receives six hours credit. (Students working as cooperating teachers have completed the program during their freshman year.)

Training and Planning. These students receive constant training and supervision under master teachers of writing. Cooperating teachers

participate in every pahse of this program: Initial planning, weekly planning, instruction, and program evaluation. The program staff spends an hour and a half weekly preparing the next week's workshops. Also, each cooperating teacher spends an additional hour with his faculty teacher planning division of labor, etc., for the next week's workshops.

Superior Educational Training. Utilizing the finest pedagogical methods available, taught how to be imaginative with curriculum and how to turn a classroom into a learning center, the student has received a superior education and personal guidance in teaching the skill and art of learning the habit of good expository writing.

Competence Level. Any student completing this project, the writing staff considers fully capable of establishing successful writing units for public-private school pupils from grades 3-12 and for college-level students.

Additional Credit. With writing staff approval, each cooperating teacher, for an additional hour credit, may work in a public school classroom with faculty teacher and the public school teacher, on a two-week or three-week unit focussed on developing the habit of good writing.

THE EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM "ROLE OF WRITING IN THE WORLD OF WORK"

The Wesleyan Writing Workshops staff adds to or modifies this program on an experimental basis, utilizing a planning, implementation, and evaluation pattern. The "role of writing in the world of work," the subject of this essay, constitutes a recent experiment.

Definition. The "Role of Writing in the World of Work" program enables students to meet distinguished business and industry guests to discuss the importance and significance of writing well in business, industry, and the professions.

Objective. As its chief objective, the program seeks to help students discern the practical relevance and consequences of being able to write effectively, thereby increasing their commitment to learning to write successfully.

Organization of the Experiment. In the first year 1976-77, our staff selected six expository sections meeting Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in conventional fifty-minute periods to participate in this enrichment program. Next, we invited five persons, one per three-week period, to spend a Friday on our campus, meeting individually with each of six workshops. We invited the chief administrative officer of the world's second largest gas transmission firm (utilities), the treasurer and vice president of a retail department store chain (merchandise retailing) with more than one hundred stores in the southeastern region of the U.S., the chief medical doctor of a clinic with more than twenty-five doctors practicing together (medicine and allied health services), an attorney, the affirmative action officer and equal opportunity director of municipal government (government). During the second year, most of these guests repeated their visits. Also, the Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky participated the second year. These persons contributed the day, at no expense to our college.[1]

[1]Education committees of Chambers of Commerce, The National Alliance of Businessmen, and other organizations can assist educators in locating able persons willing to participate in such a program.

Format for Enrichment Workshops. We utilized a strict time schedule to assure maximum beneficial communication between guests and students. After brief introductions (we used name-tags to save time), the visiting representative spoke for no more than twelve minutes (if he had additional material to share, he could introduce it as he responded to student questions and comments). Each workshop leader adhered to the following presentation:)1 He described specific skills and levels of skills necessary for entry into occupations the person represents; 2) The person outlined the role good writing plays in advancement and promotion in these careers; 3) and he commented on particular problems of poor writing which have crossed the representative's desk. During the remainder of the workshop--approximately thirty-five minutes--students asked questions and conversed with the guest.

Evaluation. We evaluated these sessions through student questionnaires, through oral interviews with guests, and in weekly staff meetings.

Student Evaluation. On the Monday following each role-of-writing-in-the-world-of-work occasion, we asked students present the previous Friday to evaluate the session on a five-point Likert scale (agree strongly, agree, neutral, disagree, disagree strongly). This evaluative instrument also invited students to comment subjectively on three questions. Distribution of responses to items on the three questions organized on a Likert scale are instructive. As we consider the data below, we should keep in mind that the program obtained 529 responses in summary totals (see Table 1). The first item asked students to respond to the statement, "I enjoyed this session." Four hundred forty-two students agreed strongly and agreed. (AS: 186--35 percent; A: 256-48 percent) for a total of 83 percent. Seventy-eight persons or 15 percent remained neutral, and 9 or 2 percent disagreed (80 + 105).

TABLE I

ROLE OF WRITING IN THE WORLD OF WORK:

STUDENT EVALUATION SUMMARY

DO NOT FILL OUT THIS FORM IF YOU DID NOT ATTEND FRIDAY'S WORKSHOP.

W E S L E Y A N W R I T I N G W O R K S H O P S

"The Role of Writing in the World of Work"

Evaluation Form

Please indicate your evaluation of the "Role of Writing in the World of Work" held Friday, 19 November 1976, with Dr. David Orrahood as guest (Role of Writing in the Allied Health Field).

I enjoyed this session.

186----------35% / 256-----48% / 78--------15% / 8--------2% / 1-------.1%

Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
442----------83%			9----2%	

I learned some ideas and facts about the relation between writing and work.

130----------25% / 307-----58% / 72-------14% / 12-------2% / 2------.4%

Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
443----------83%			14----3%	

I gained some insight into the relationship between communication and the career I am thinking of pursuing.

100----------19% / 174-----33% / 197-------37% / 51-------10% / 7------.1%

Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
274----------52%			58-----11%	

What Did you like most about this session?

What did you like least about this session?

Other comments? Suggestions? Recommendations?

On the second evaluative question, which reads, "I learned some ideas and facts about the relation between writing and work," 443 or 83% agreed strongly, (AS: 130--25 percent) or agreed (A: 307--58 percent); 72 or 14 percent remained neutral; 14 or 3 percent disagreed (12 D 2% and 2 DS .4%).

On the third item, which reads, "I gained some insight into the relationship between communications and the career I am thinking of pursuing," 274 or 52 percent agreed strongly (AS: 100--19 percent) or agreed (A: 174--33 percent); 197 or 37 percent remained neutral; 51--10 percent disagreed; and 7 or 1 percent disagreed strongly for a total of 11 percent negative. We should note that in a typical freshman English class, we would expect the vast majority of students in each session not to be interested in that particular career option.

Of the ten individual summaries of all sections for each speaker, only two summary evaluations for categories "agree strongly" and "agree" on individual speakers fell below 80 percent on the first two items-- a 72 percent and a 78 percent. On the same first two items, the "disagree" and "disagree strongly" percentages did not total more than 3 percent with one exception--a 6 percent. Of the five individual summaries of all sections of each speaker, the summary of the category of neutral responses remained under 20 percent with one exception--a 24 percent.

Again, regarding the ten individual summaries of all sections of each speaker, positive responses (agree strongly or agree) to the third item remained at 50 percent with two exceptions--48 percent and 49 percent. The neutral category stayed under 40 percent with one exception--a 42 percent.

From these statistics, we can conclude that students possessed positive perceptions about this program. Indeed, student interest in this program was especially high and enthusiastic. For example, students lingered afterwards, in almost all workshops so that faculty had to urge them on their way in order to begin the next session on time (all workshops occurred in the same room).

Oral Evaluation of Guests. Brief interviews with each guest indicated that each visitor enjoyed the day, experienced personal satisfaction regarding his performance, wanted to visit again, and felt exhausted.

Staff Evaluation. Without exception, participating faculty members expressed pronounced satisfaction with this enrichment program, all of them requesting that we extend it year-long to ten or fifteen sessions and urging inclusion of nonparticipating workshops. Following conclusion of the enrichment program, the staff judged that participating students showed more interest in small details about writing; gradually expressed more concern about basic matters such as effective grammatical instructions, punctuation, accuracy of statement; and gradually have exhibited deeper commitment to mastering effective writing skills.

The evaluation instrument, as I mentioned, invites subjective evaluative responses to three items:

> What did you like most about this session?
>
> What did you like least about this session?
>
> Other comments? Suggestions? Recommendations?

Quantifiably, their subjective responses paralleled the statistical findings. Even negative responses imply positive attitudes. For example, many students wanted the speaker to come again. They wanted us to allow

more time. Significantly, students suggested that other departments should invite speakers to relate the relevance of academic subject matter to the work world.

CONCLUSIONS

Our conclusions about the program's value led our staff to the following decisions: We will build the program into our regular first-year writing curriculum. During a 3-year period, we will expand it to ten visiting sessions and spread it throughout the first-year writing program--a visitor once a month or every three weeks and all sections participating. We will keep the same organization and format. We will retain the same evaluative techniques. On occasion, we will invite to participate one or more faculty members from the department or program appropriate to the area represented that particular day. (Some instructors have expressed reservations about this decision, and we may rescind the action.)

Students overwhelmingly endorse the Role of Writing in the World of Work program. Upon hearing that I would describe this program at a conference, one of my students said, "Bod, tell 'em these speakers are really tough." I think he meant--"a good thing." Our staff affirm the experiment, too. All of us associated with this Freshman English enrichment program recommend that other colleges and universities consider a similar experiment.